

Fort Logan H. Roots Military Post
(Veterans Administration Hospital, North Little Rock Division)
Building No. 1, Enlisted Mens Barracks
Scenic Hill Drive
North Little Rock
Pulaski County
Arkansas

HABS No. AR-25 A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FORT LOGAN H. ROOTS MILITARY POST
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Location: Scenic Hill Drive
North Little Rock
Pulaski County, Arkansas

Present Owner: U.S. Government

Present Occupant: Veterans Administration Medical Center
Little Rock, Arkansas
North Little Rock Division

Present Use: The present use of Building No. 1 is for storage of obsolete equipment. Following renovation, Building No. 1 will be used for administrative office space.

Significance: Building No. 1 was part of the original construction of the Fort Logan H. Roots Military Post. Serving as the Enlisted Mens Barracks, it exemplifies the simple architectural forms constructed at this post at the turn of the century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1895-6
2. Architect: U.S. Army
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army, 1895-1920;
Veterans Administration, 1921 - present.
4. Alterations and additions: The only significant alteration to Building No. 1 occurred in the early 1920s, subsequent to the Veterans Administration assuming ownership of the building. At that time, several interior partitions in the core of the building were added as well as security screens on the windows to modify the building for use as a neuropsychiatric hospital ward. Since that time, there have been no alterations or additions to the building.

B. Historical Context:

Fort Logan H. Roots stands as a well-preserved reminder of the sometimes halting efforts of pre-Spanish-American War military men to concentrate and modernize the U.S. Army in light of the technological and industrial developments of the era. Located on major rail lines, Fort Logan Roots and several posts like it were envisioned by military planners as centers from which troops could be rapidly dispatched to trouble spots when needed.

Although the Army commenced construction of Fort Logan Roots in 1893 and garrisoned it in 1896, Fort Logan Roots never served fully the purposes for which it was intended. In 1898 the Spanish-American War intervened, construction was halted, and the fort's garrison sent to Puerto Rico. This war and the new role of the United States in international politics required a larger and better Army, thus making the strategy of internal defense, which had dictated Fort Roots, obsolete. Thus Fort Logan Roots uniquely commemorates the disruptive effect of the Spanish-American War on long-range American military planning.

Despite its obsolescence, Fort Roots, maintained by a small garrison, remained in operation until almost the end of World War I. In 1912 Lieutenant George Catlett Marshall, future Chief of Staff and Secretary of State, served here, amply demonstrating his great capacity for organization. Troops from Fort Roots were sent to Mexico to campaign against Pancho Villa, and during World War I, the post was used as a military training facility. Soon thereafter, Fort Roots became a Veterans Administration Hospital, serving as a center for neuropsychiatric diseases. At present, it still serves in that capacity and is one of the largest hospitals of its type in the United States.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Fort Logan H. Roots is situated on a 530-foot-high, wooded promontory overlooking the Arkansas River and the city of Little Rock, which sprawls across the gently rolling hills to the south. Downtown North Little Rock is about two miles to the east. Virtually free of intruding modern structures, the historic district covers about 26 acres and includes some 20 principal buildings. The focal point of the grounds is an 11-acre, quasi-elliptical, grassy parade area surrounded by Main Circle Drive and accented by a 75-foot-high metal flagpole (circa 1896) typical of late-19th-century U.S. Army posts. Officers' quarters stand in an east-west line off the lower southwest edge of the parade ground, while a

hospital building and what probably were noncommissioned officers' quarters are positioned irregularly off the southeast edge. Administrative offices and enlisted men's barracks stand along Main Circle Drive north of the parade ground. Support buildings, including a guardhouse and stable, lie on either side of Hill Road. The primary ascending approach to the post, this artery enters the old fort from the east and joins Main Circle Drive at the northeastern rim of the parade ground.

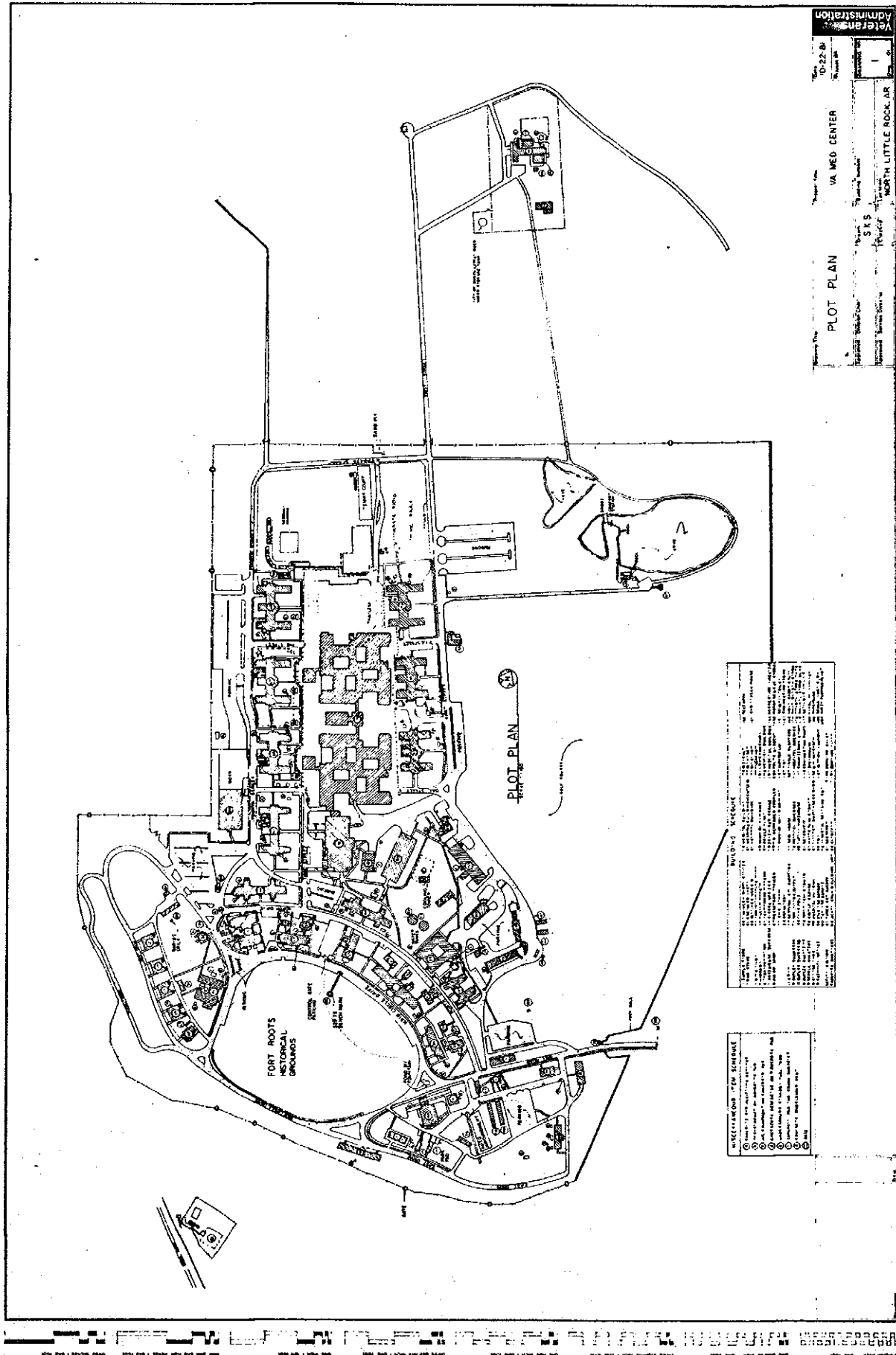
Erected in 1896, the Enlisted Mens Barracks is a rectangular-shaped, red brick edifice measuring 255 feet long by 64 feet wide and consisting of a three-story, hip-roofed central pavilion flanked on the east and west sides by 2½-story, elongated, hip-roofed wings. A gable dormer juts from the front and rear slopes of the slate-covered pavilion roof, and two shed dormers adorn both the front and rear slopes of the wing roofs. Passing fully across the front facade is a two-story, Doric-column-supported, hip-roofed gallery. The upper portion is enclosed, but the columns are still visible. The lower portion of the gallery remains open, revealing two-over-two sash windows set in segmentally arched openings. The lower columns are linked by an iron railing that is original. A single-tiered, enclosed porch crosses the rear of the building and receives a second deck from the pavilion facade. From the center and each end of the rear gallery, covered walkways lead to support buildings--two small messhalls and a kitchen. The now-vacant barracks is not significantly altered inside. Each main story of each wing contains two large rooms that remain unpartitioned and display round, metal support columns. Modern tiles cover the wood floors.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Fort Logan H. Roots Military Post National Register nomination

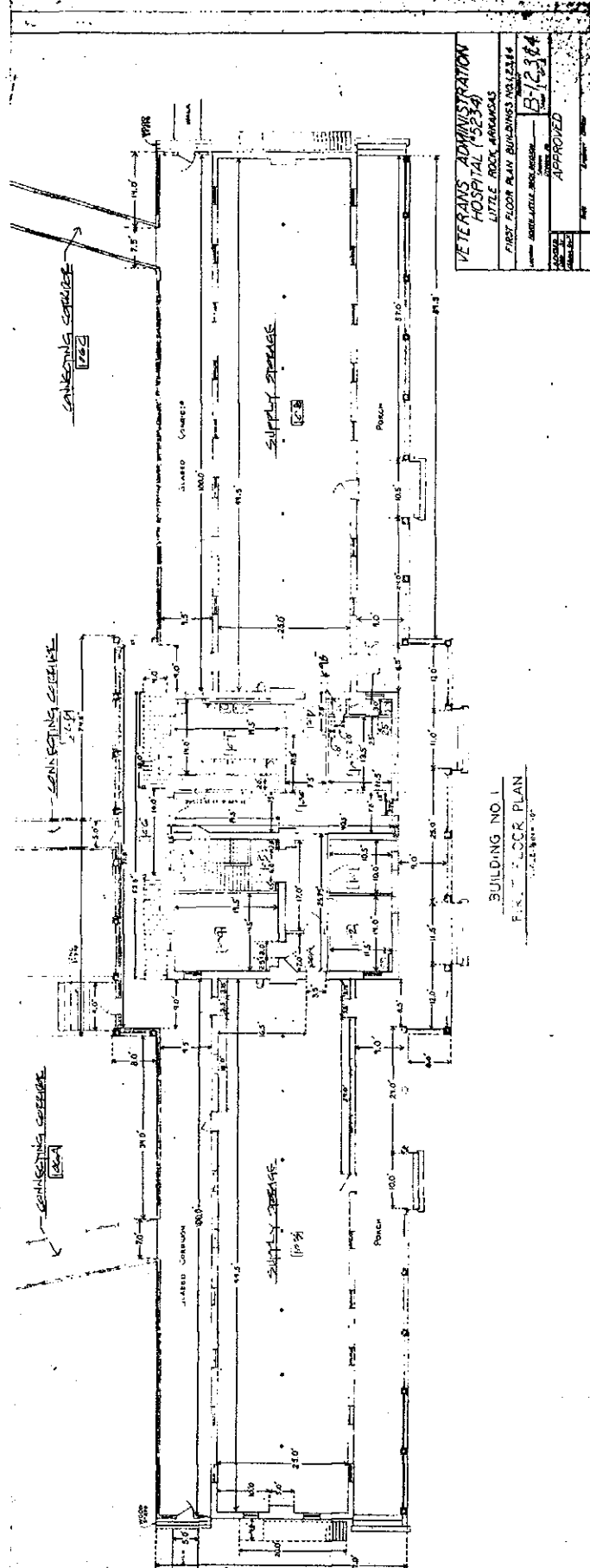
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The purpose of this project is to adaptively rehabilitate and modernize the interior of Building 1 to make it suitable for use as administrative office space for Engineering Service and Building Management Service. The accomplishment of this project involves replacing the exterior windows, the installation of the drop ceiling, the construction of internal partitions which will delineate administrative office areas, and the installation of a modern central heating and cooling system. This work will be accomplished under Memorandum of Agreement between the Veterans Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer.

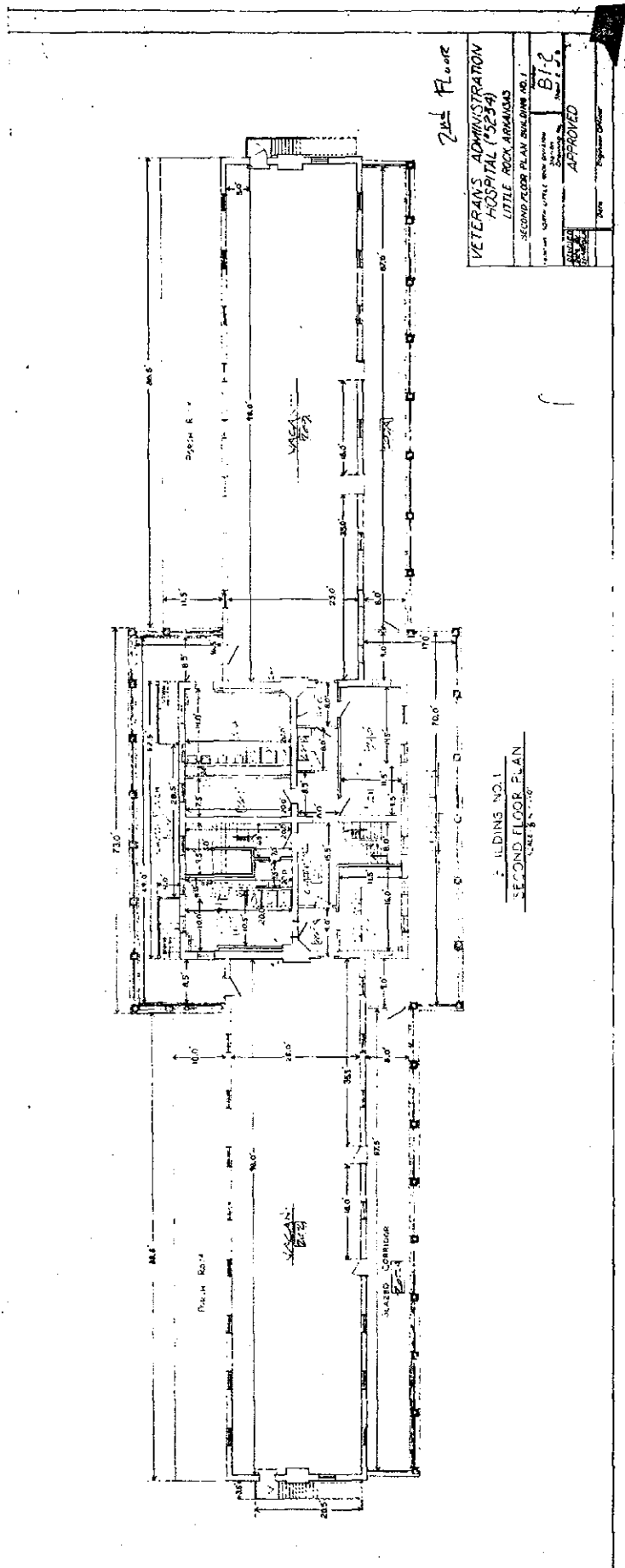


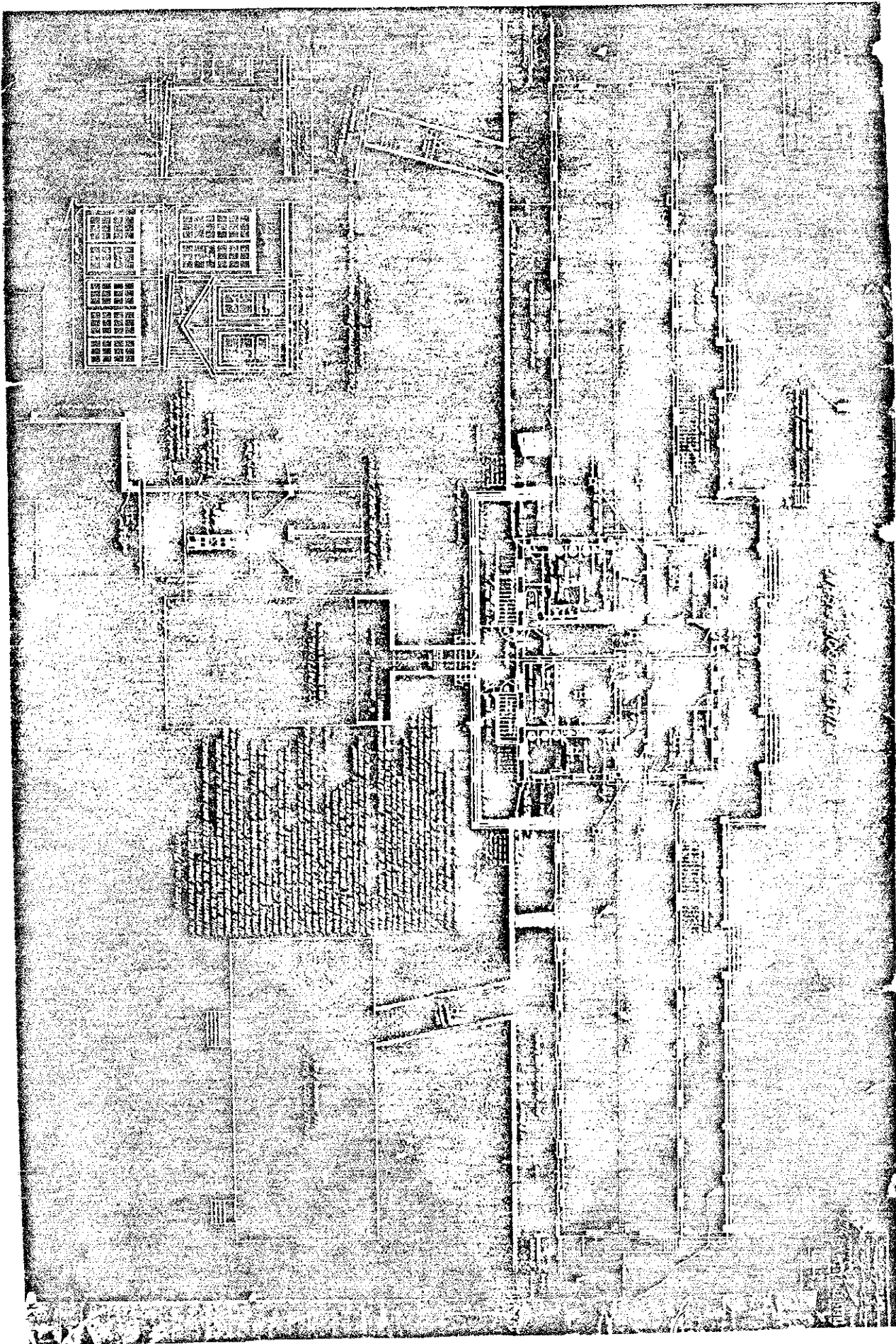
PORT LOGAN H. ROOTS MILITARY POST
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HABS No. AR-25A (page 4)

FORT LOGAN H. ROO'S MILITARY POST
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Building No. 1, Enlisted Mens Barracks
HABS No. AR-25A (page 5)



FORT LOGAN H. ROOTS MILITARY POST
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HABS No. AR-25A (page 6)





Building No. 1, first floor plan detailing alterations made to original floor plan, dated July 13, 1921

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HABS No. AR-25A (page7)